

**CALIFORNIA WILDLIFE HABITAT RELATIONSHIPS SYSTEM**  
**maintained by the**  
**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME**  
**and supported by the**  
**CALIFORNIA INTERAGENCY WILDLIFE TASK GROUP**  
**Database Version 8.1 (2005)**

---

B376 Ruby-crowned Kinglet *Regulus calendula*  
Family: Regulidae Order: Passeriformes Class: Aves

Written by: D. Dobkin  
Reviewed by: L. Mewaldt  
Edited by: R. Duke

#### DISTRIBUTION, ABUNDANCE, AND SEASONALITY

A common, summer resident and breeder in coniferous forest habitats with open to moderate canopy in the Klamath Mts., Cascade Range, Sierra Nevada, portions of the Transverse and Peninsular Ranges, and Mt. Piños in Ventura Co. Breeds from 450-3000 m (1500-10,000 ft) elevation (Grinnell and Miller 1944, Small 1974, Gaines 1977b). Abundant in winter at lower elevations throughout the state in a variety of habitats containing trees or shrubs.

#### SPECIFIC HABITAT REQUIREMENTS

**Feeding:** Feeds on insects, spiders, other small arthropods, some fruits, and occasionally on seeds (Bent 1949). Hovers, gleans, and snatches from foliage, small twigs, and canopy branches; flycatches occasionally. Forages in upper canopy in summer at higher elevations. Forages in winter at lower elevations more commonly in low shrubs and deciduous cover of all kinds, and in conifers.

**Cover:** Finds cover in coniferous forests for nesting and feeding in summer. Trees and shrubs in a variety of habitats provide cover in winter.

**Reproduction:** Builds a hanging nest attached to conifer twigs. Nest usually near tip of branch far above ground. Nest height 0.6-31 m (2-100 ft) above ground (Bent 1949). Nest often concealed in needle tufts at middle height in lodgepole pine, mountain hemlock, or fir (Grinnell and Miller 1944).

**Water:** Has been reported bathing (Antevs 1948).

**Pattern:** In summer, breeds and feeds in montane coniferous forests with open to moderate canopy. An array of tree and shrub habitats at lower elevations is used in winter.

#### SPECIES LIFE HISTORY

**Activity Patterns:** Yearlong, diurnal activity.

**Seasonal Movements/Migration:** Some upslope movement in late summer and early fall. All higher elevation populations move to lower elevations for winter.

**Home Range:** In Arizona spruce-fir habitat, Carothers et al. (1973) found 40-46 breeders per 40 ha (100 ac). In Douglas-fir in Idaho, Johnston (1949) recorded 40 breeders per 40 ha (100 ac).

**Territory:** Although reported to be territorial in winter (Morse 1970, Rea 1970), Austin and

Smith (1972) reported up to 8 foraging together without aggression. In San Diego, Rea (1970) sketched the approximate winter territory of an individual over 2 yr, measuring 0.24 0.36 ha (0.6-0.9 ac).

Reproduction: Breeds from mid-May to mid-August, with peak from mid-June to late July. Monogamous. Clutch size 5-11 eggs, mostly 7-9. Incubation 14-15 days, by female (Harrison 1978). Altricial young tended by both parents.

Niche: A regular host of brown-headed cowbirds (Friedmann et al. 1977). May join flocks to forage in winter with titmice, nuthatches, brown creepers, kinglets, warblers (Ehrlich et al. 1988).

## REFERENCES

- Antevs, A. 1948. Behavior of the Gila woodpecker, ruby-crowned kinglet, and broad-tailed hummingbird. *Condor* 50:91-92.
- Austin, G. T., and E. L. Smith. 1972. Winter foraging ecology of mixed insectivorous bird flocks in oak woodlands in southern Arizona. *Condor* 74:17-24.
- Bent, A. C. 1949. Life histories of North American thrushes, kinglets, and their allies. U.S. Natl. Mus. Bull. 196. 454pp.
- Carothers, S. W., R. P. Balda, and J. R. Haldeman. 1973. Habitat selection and density of breeding birds of a coniferous forest in the White Mountains, Arizona. Pages 22-36 in S. W. Carothers, J. R. Haldeman, and R. P. Balda, eds. *Breeding birds of the San Francisco Mountain area and the White Mountains, Arizona*. Mus. North. Ariz. Tech. Ser. 12. 54pp.
- Ehrlich, P. R., D. S. Dobkin, and D. Wheye. 1988. *The birder's handbook*. Simon and Schuster, New York. 785pp.
- Friedmann, H., L. F. Kiff, and S. I. Rothstein. 1977. A further contribution to knowledge of the host relation of the parasitic cowbirds. *Smithsonian Contrib. Zool.* No. 235. 75pp.
- Gaines, D. 1977b. *Birds of the Yosemite Sierra*. California Syllabus, Oakland. 153pp.
- Grinnell, J., and A. H. Miller. 1944. *The distribution of the birds of California*. Pac. Coast Avifauna No. 27. 608pp.
- Harrison, C. 1978. *A field guide to the nests, eggs and nestlings of north American birds*. W. Collins Sons and Co., Cleveland, OH. 416pp.
- Johnston, D. W. 1949. Populations and distribution of summer birds of Latah County, Idaho. *Condor* 51:140-149.
- Morse, D. H. 1970. Ecological aspects of some mixed-species foraging flocks of birds. *Ecol. Monogr.* 40:119-168.
- Rea, A. M. 1970. Winter territoriality in a ruby-crowned kinglet. *West. Bird-Bander* 1970:4-7.
- Small, A. 1974. *The birds of California*. Winchester Press, New York. 310pp.